CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An automatically switched camera system comprising:

sensor means for providing data of an image scene having subjects who are behaving in a manner which make them potential targets of the camera system;

indicating means for providing an advanced notification to the subjects of the image scene that one of them is about to become a target of the camera system;

image scene analyzing means communicating with the sensor and the indicating means, the analyzing means for analyzing the data of the image scene provided by the sensor means to select one of the subjects as a target of the camera system and outputting an indicator function command that causes the indicating means to provide the advanced notification to the selected subject.

2. The camera system according to claim 1, wherein the sensor means includes a video camera having at least one of panning means, tilting means, and lens zooming means.

3. The camera system according to claim 2, further comprising controller means communicating with the sensor means and the image scene analyzing means, the controller means for selectively controlling the camera of the sensor means in response to commands outputted from the image scene analyzing means.

4. The camera system according to claim 1, further comprising timing means communicating with the image scene analyzing means, the timing means for measuring the amount of time the subjects perform the behavior which makes them potential targets of the camera system, the timing means outputting the time to the image scene analyzing means.

5. The camera system according to claim 1, further comprising controller means communicating with the image scene analyzing means and the indicating means, the controller means for selectively activating the indicating means in response to commands outputted from the image scene analyzing means.

6. The camera system according to claim 1, wherein the indicating means comprises at least one of a light indicator, an audio indicator, a PIP display, and an anthropomorphic device.

7. The camera system according to claim 1, wherein the image scene analyzing means comprises a multimodal image analysis module.

8. A pre-take indicator for use with an automatically switched camera system, the pre-take indicator comprising:

indicating means for providing an advanced notification to subjects of an image scene that one of them is about to become a target of the system,

control means communicating with the indicating means and the automatically switched camera system, the control means for activating the indicating means in response to commands

received from the automatically switched camera system when the system has selected one of the subjects as a target of the system.

9. A method for providing advanced notification to subjects of image scene one of them is about to become a target of an automatically switched camera system including sensor means for providing data of an image scene having subjects who are behaving in a manner which make them potential targets of the camera system and image scene analyzing means for analyzing the data of the image scene provided by the sensor means to select one of the subjects as a target of the camera system, the method comprising:

providing indicating means for notifying the subjects of the image scene that one of them is about to become a target of the camera system;

analyzing the data of the image scene obtained with sensors using the analyzing means;

selecting one of the subjects with target selection means, who is behaving in a manner which makes them a best target of the camera system; and

activating the indicating means to notify the subject that has been selected to become the target of the camera system.

10. The method according to claim 9, wherein the activating step is performed prior to the subject becoming the target of the camera system.